(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The regiments raised on the basis of caste/class during the pre-independence period are continuing for historical, traditional and motivational reasons.

Purchase of 636 diesel submarines from Russia

1577. SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to make an off-the-shelf purchase of two type 636 diesel-electric 'Kilo' class submarines from Russia;

(b) if so, the payment modalities worked out by Government, and

(c) the extent to which the procurement of the submarines would enhance the combat capability of the Indian Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However there is a proposal for purchase of two 877 EKM Submarines from Russia. The expected modality of payment is based on stage payments.

(c) These submarines are intended to replace Foxtrot class of submarines due for decommissioning, and would serve the purpose of maintainance of force levels.

Decommissioning of INS Vikrant

1578. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) to what use the earstwhile aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, INS Vikrant, is being put after being decommissioned; and

(b) the steps taken to induct another aircraft carrier in the Navy after decommissioning of Vikrant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Suggestions have been received for conversion of 'INS Vikrant' into a museum. Such a conversion is dependent on the feasibility or otherwise of doing so.

(b) Feasibility of outright purchase of an aircraft carrier as a replacement for INS Vikrant is under examination.

Airborne warning and Control System for IAF

1579. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Air Force has proposed requirement of Rs.3000 crore for Airborne warning and Control System;

(b) whether Government have given approval to the request; and

(c) if not, the steps proposed to ensure optimum utilisation of Air Defence Aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) to (c) A proposal has recently come from the IAF for acquisition/development of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), which is under examination.

Unsatisfactory progress of the LCA project

1580. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of the periodical assurance being given on the satisfactory progress of the LCA, the project continues to slip; and

(b) if so, what is the actual situation and PDC?